

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 121100Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 929
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMCONSUL ASMARA

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 0104

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR AND OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ET, US, SU

SUBJECT: INITIAL DEBRIEFING KAGNEW 2

BEGIN SUMMARY. KAGNEW 2 OBSERVATIONS DURING FOUR MONTHS
DETENTION BY ELF SHED LIGHT ON GROUP'S MOVEMENTS, MOTIVATION
AND MODUS
OPERANDI. PAIR MADE EVIDENTLY RELATIVELY ANODYNE
RECORDED STATEMENT TO ELF LEADER IMMEDIATELY PRIOR
THEIR RELEASE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS PROVIDE DETAILS GLEANED FROM
INFORMAL DEBRIEFINGS KAGNEW 2 HOSTAGES BOWIDOWICZ AND
STRICKLAND AT RESIDENCE JANUARY 9-10 PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE
FOR EUCOM.

2. CAPTURE: PAIR WAS SEIZED BY "DEMOLITION UNIT" WHOSE
INSTRUCTIONS HAD NOT REPEAT NOT INCLUDED BLOWING UP TRACT D
SITE. HOWEVER, ELF COMMAND/CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS TIME
CONSUMING DUE BOTH (A) ABSENCE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
(MESSAGES FROM COMMANDARS TO UNITS TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS);
AND (B) EGALITARIAN NATURE OF MOVEMENT (ORDINARILY SOLDIERS
FREQUENTLY DEBATE, AND DO NOT NECESSAIRLY OBEY ORDERS
RECEIVED). PAIR BELIEVE THEY WERE TAKEN AS RESULT AN AD HOC

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DECISION ON SPOT. MOHAMMED OWD (PHONETIC) WHOM

THEY IDENTIFIED AS AN ELF MILITARY LEADER, WAS INITIALLY IGNORANT OF THEIR CAPTURE. KAGNEW 2 ASSUME MICHALKE SEIZURE LAST MONTH WAS SIMILARLY UNAUTHORIZED.

3. PERSONAL WELFARE: ELF FOOD BOTH DREARY AND LACKING NUTRITIONAL VALUE. EVEN ELF MEN TAKE VITAMIN SHOTS WHENEVER THEY CAN. PAIR THEREFORE WERE MOST APPRECIATIVE OF INITIAL PACKAGES FOOD, VITAMINS AND BLANKETS WHICH DID REACH THEM DURING NOVEMBER. AS RESULT, STRICKLAND GAINED BACK SOME OF WEIGHT LOST AND BOTH MEN FELT LESS EXHAUSTED AND RUN-DOWN THAN AT FIRST.

4. GENERAL TREATMENT: KAGNEW 2 AT ALL TIMES WERE UNDER GUARD BY ONE TWELVE-MAN DETACHMENT ARMED WITH SOVIENHPK-47 AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. ALL 12 WERE YOUNG. THREE WERE CHRISTIAN. ONE SPOKE EXCELLENT ENGLISH AND ACTED AS INTERPRETER, THOUGH MOST UNDERSTOOD SOME ENGLISH. GUARDS WERE SYMPATHETIC AND OCCASIONALLY WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO BE HELPFUL, BUT LIEUTENANT IN CHARGE OFTEN BULLIED PAIR OR WAS NEEDLESSLY INCONSIDERATE. GROUP MOVED PRISONERS EVERY THREE TO FOUR WEEKS WITH A 50-MILE RADIUS OF ELF HQ AT LOCATION CALLED RUBDA REPEAT RUBDA. THEY WERE NEVER AT HQ AND HAD ALMOST NO CONTACT WITH ELF LEADERSHIP. PAIR SURPRISED FIND ON BEING RELEASED, THAT THEY HAD BEEN ONLY 10 MINUTES DRIVE FROM SUDANESE FRONTIER.

5. ELF ORGANIZATION AND MORALE: THREE-QUARTERS ELF PERSONNEL SAID TO BE UNDER 25 WITH SOME IN EARLY TEENS. RECRUITS RECEIVE POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION ALONG WITH THEIR MILITARY TRAINING. KAGNEW 2 WERE CONTINUALLY CALLED UPON DEFEND USG RECORD ON VIETNAM AND ETHIOPIA BY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN DRILLED ON ANTI-US LINE. ELF MORALE WAS DESCRIBED AS HIGH WITH FORCES PREPARED FOR LONG STRUGGLE. ALL UNITS SEEN HAD AUTOMATIC RIFLES AND SOME POSSESSED ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS (PAIR SAW SOME AMMO). ELF ISSUES MONTHLY PROPAGANDA HANDOUT FOR ALL RANKS IN TIGRINYA. MASTHEAD CARRIES SYMBOL OF HAMMER AND SICKLE BUT ELF MEN CAREFULLY NOTED TO KAGNEW 2 THAT THESE ARE SEPARATED, NOT LINKED AS IN USSR.

6. ELF GOALS: ELF IS FIGHTING FOR FULL INDEPENDENCE.
AN RCC OF SOME SORT WOULD THEN BE SET UP FOR TRANSITIONAL
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PERIOD FOLLOWED BY "DEMOCRACY" AFTER FIVE YEARS. THOUGH ELF CONTACTS WERE HIGHLY CRITICAL USG FOREIGN POLICIES, (E.G., VIETNAM, ANGOLA), AME INDIVIDUALS TOLD PAIR THEY REGARD RUSSIANS AS "NO GOOD".

7. RELEASE STATEMENT: PAIR WERE REQUIRED MAKE RECORDED STATEMENT TO ELF LEADER AT TIME THEY WERE INFORMED OF THEIR RELEASE. THEY STATE THAT THEIR REMARKS WERE LIMITED TO GIVING

THEIR NAMES AND SIMILAR IDENTIFYING INFO AND THAT THEY SAID
NOTHING BFJURIOUS TO USG (COMMENT: TENOR THEIR REMARKS
IMPLIED THAT THEY MAY HAVE INCLUDED COMMENTS IN STATEMENT
DESCRIBING FAVORABLY THE TREATMENT THEY HUI RECEIVED).

8. COMMENT: RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON KAGNEW 2, PLUS THEIR
IGNORANCE OF LOCAL LANGUAGE, OBVIOUSLY LIMIT VALUE THEIR
OBERVATIONS. HOWEVER, DURATION THEIR DETENTION AND FACT THAT
THEIR GUARDS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ON GENERALLY GOOD TERMS
WITH THEM SEEMS TO HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM GAIN SOME
APPRECIATION ELF MODUS OPERANDI.
BREWER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCEUR.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, MILITARY PLANS, LIBERATION FRONTS, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT, HOSTAGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KHARTO00104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760010-0531
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760166/aaaachbh.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INITIAL DEBRIEFING KAGNEW 2 BEGIN SUMMARY. KAGNEW 2 OBSERVATIONS DURING FOUR MONTHS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ET, US, SU, ELF, (STRICKLAND), (BOWIDOWICZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006